

## **SUCCESS STORY**

### **Portland District Office**

---

#### **At Home in the Vineyard: Cultivating a Winery, an Industry and a Life by Susan Sokol Blosser**



*At Home in the Vineyard: Cultivating a Winery, an Industry and a Life* is Susan Sokol Blosser's (left) account of the early days of Oregon's wine industry from her point of view as the co-founder of one of the first Oregon wineries to gain international recognition for premium-quality pinot noirs. She uses humor and honesty to recount the struggles and triumphs that she and her former husband, Bill Blosser, and their fellow pioneers encountered in the early days of Oregon's wine industry. They had little capital and big ambitions.

Sokol Blosser and Bill bought their first vineyard, an abandoned Willamette Valley prune orchard, almost on a whim. Over the next two decades Sokol Blosser, Bill Blosser and their extended family learned just how hard it could be. They poured their hearts and their money into the business. They secured a Small Business Administration loan which they paid off by borrowing from family members because the interest rates of the 1980s shot sky high. After years of struggle, Sokol Blosser became one of a handful of internationally famous Oregon vineyard/wineries, and she evolved from earth mother to corporate executive, jetting around the country and schmoozing with owners of exclusive restaurants and wine shops. Her story celebrates the success of Sokol Blosser and of the wine industry as a whole, but she is candid about the toll it took on her marriage and family relationships.

Susan's account of her milestones and critical moments during the time that the industry was growing in Oregon becomes a good primer for someone interested in starting a business.

Originally from Milwaukie, Wisconsin, Susan holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stanford University and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Reed College.

*For more information on all of SBA's programs and services, visit our website [www.sba.gov/or](http://www.sba.gov/or).*